

DEEPENING THE PORT OF SAVANNAH

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, today, when the House passes the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, included in it will be the largest infrastructure project in the history of Georgia. Deepening the Savannah River from 42 to 47 feet will open up our port to lots of different countries and lots of different kinds of vessels from all over the world. 352,000 jobs are related to the Port of Savannah. The cost-benefit ratio is a dollar spent, five-and-a-half dollar return.

It has been studied by four different Federal agencies and signed off by four Federal agencies. In fact, there were 64 individual studies on environmental impact, historic impact, traffic impact, and nearly just about everything else under the sun.

It is a project that Georgia companies will greatly benefit from, as will all the Southeast, because 62 percent of what the port does is export goods and services. So it opens up the door to all kinds of new markets.

I have to thank the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on a bipartisan basis for all that they have done and thank Mr. SHUSTER for coming to Savannah three different times to look at this project personally.

We are very excited about this. Let's pass this bill today. Let's get the Senate to pass it. Let's get the House and the Senate moving, and let's get Georgians and the whole Southeast back to work.

PUNISHMENT FOR SEX TRAFFICKERS

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, sex trafficking is a growing problem. According to the Polaris Project, some 27 million people worldwide are victims of sex trafficking, of which 1 million are children. Just last year in Nevada, 107 children were recovered after being victimized by traffickers. And we don't even know how many others wait for our help.

That is why I am pleased to vote today on several bills intended to strengthen the punishments for perpetrators, increase protections for potential victims, and ensure that victims are given the support they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

I am also encouraged that we are coming together to condemn the horrendous kidnapping of the girls in Nigeria, whose only crime was to seek an education.

Sex trafficking is horrific. It must be stopped. It denies the fundamental rights and dignity of its victims. Today, we can take a step in that di-

rection. We can take action to speak for those who have no voice. So I encourage my colleagues to join me with a resounding "aye" on this package of bills.

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, next week, our Nation will celebrate Memorial Day to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Nation. May is also National Military Appreciation Month. We are grateful to those in our military for their service, and we strive to make sure they receive the benefits and the services they were promised and that they have earned.

Unfortunately, the quality of services for veterans does not always match our gratitude. Veterans often face long wait times in scheduling appointments, and a record backlog of cases continues to go unaddressed. Serious allegations of mismanagement are raising many questions.

This is why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 4031, the Department of Veterans Affairs Management Accountability Act, which will be considered tomorrow by the House. This legislation would allow the Secretary of the VA more personnel flexibility, resulting in more accountability.

This Memorial Day and Military Appreciation Month, it is an honor to serve the men and women in uniform who have given us so much.

HARBOR MAINTENANCE

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, after a lot of hard work and collaborative effort, I am pleased that the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference committee, which I was honored to serve on, was finally able to come to a fair, bipartisan agreement on the new water bill that will create jobs and keep our ports globally competitive.

As a representative of the Nation's busiest port complex in Los Angeles and Long Beach, and cofounder of our PORTS Caucus here in Congress, I have fought hard from my first day in Congress to increase funding for our Nation's ports by fully utilizing our Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure that money that is collected at our ports goes back to our ports.

They don't call me Ms. Harbor Maintenance Tax for nothing around here. It has been a long journey, but I am thrilled that after countless hearings and meetings with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and with the leadership from Chairman SHUSTER and

Ranking Member RAHALL that our proposals to fully utilize our Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and to allow ports to use these funds for expanded uses is included in this final water bill.

When we pass this bipartisan measure, it is a victory not just for the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, but for all our ports—our ports in Savannah and all those in this Nation. When our ports are strong, Mr. Speaker, our Nation is strong.

SCANDAL AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the chorus drawing attention to the appalling situation with the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have learned of the death of 40 veterans due to drawn-out wait times for medical care at facilities in Arizona. Even more disturbing is the coverup to not allow scrutiny and awareness of these tragedies. This may just be the tip of the iceberg.

These men and women offered their lives defending the freedoms of our Nation, and yet our Nation can't afford them the decency of prompt medical care.

Even with these sad and tragic cases, there are still hundreds of thousands of veterans who are waiting in line for services, medical care, and compensation for disabilities they received while serving our great Nation.

It is time for Congress to take swift action to demand better results and greater accountability. It is time that Congress reform the veterans health care system to allow greater flexibility and more options so that veterans are not stuck waiting for care.

Mr. Speaker, these men and women have earned benefits through their service to our Nation. We must keep our promises, and we must honor these American heroes.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS' PLAN TO RESTORE AMERICAN PROSPERITY

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Americans are concerned. They are concerned about their jobs. They are concerned about their health and the economy. Last week, 37 percent of Americans ranked these as the most important issues facing our country.

House Republicans have a plan to replace ObamaCare, to create jobs, to grow the economy, and to help hard-working Americans take home more of their paychecks.

While there are some difficult decisions ahead of us, there are some simple decisions that we can agree upon right now. Americans need the repeal